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ABSTRACT

This guide explains how to establish a program of supported work that can be used to enable hard-to-employ individuals (including disabled persons, ex-offenders, and rehabilitated drug and alcohol abusers) to obtain and retain jobs. The program described is based on the following five concepts: real job assignments, graduated stress, sympathetic yet firm supervision, regular evaluation and feedback, and opportunities for peer support. The guide is divided into sections addressing the following topics: the main elements of the program, needs assessment, advisory committees (establishing a network of colleagues), program funding, outreach and intake (introducing the program to referral agencies and interviewing applicants), program staffing considerations, job development (finding training sites and arranging for competetive employment), supervisor orientation (acquainting supervisors with the program and ascertaining their needs), methods of counseling trainees, disciplinary procedures (handling serious work-related problems that have resisted counseling), ancillary services (providing referrals for trainees with additional needs), follow-up (offering gradually reduced supports to former trainees), and the importance of staying on top of a program. (MN)

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Pathways to Employment

Strategies for Assisting Hard-To-Employ People

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1. Introduction

Millions of potentially productive people are deprived an opportunity to work, an opportunity to become independent. Recognizing the human and social waste, the Vera Institute of Justice has designed an approach it terms *supported work* to enable hard-to-employ individuals to obtain and retain jobs.

After demonstrating that supported work could assist ex-offenders, ex-addicts, and rehabilitated alcoholics in their quest for employment, Vera decided to adapt the concept to fit the needs of another population, mentally retarded youths and adults. As a result, the Vera Institute established Job Path in 1978 to test the feasibility of supported work in enabling this population to make the transition from sheltered environments and a state of dependency to stable jobs in the competitive labor market and increasing independence.

In addition to being retarded, a significant proportion of Job Path's participants have secondary disabilities such as epilepsy, cerebral palsy, severely limited hearing, poor eyesight, and a number of other neurological, psychological, and medical problems. The agency's experience with this varied a population suggests that Job Path's program of supported work might be adapted to enable other handicapped groups to find stable employment. Since over two-thirds of Job Path's population has been under age 25, it may well be that its approach also addresses employment needs of young people who are having particular difficulty in finding their place in the working world.

Five basic concepts are inherent in a supported work program:

1. *Real job assignments,* not "make work," so that the training period serves the purpose of transmitting job skills that are currently in demand in the competitive labor market as well as inculcating good work habits that are always in demand.

2. *Graduated stress,* which is another way of saying "incremental demands for productivity," so that people who are new to the world of work are not unduly pressured by too many initial expectations.

3. *Sympathetic, but firm, supervision* so that inexperienced workers will be able to learn from their mistakes. Without sufficient sympathy, the people with whom Job Path works would fail before they had been given a reasonable chance, but without sufficient firmness these participants would not learn to meet the standards of the competitive labor market.

4. *Regular evaluation and feedback* so that workers who lack standards of comparison because of their inexperience and who lack a well developed sense of self will know how they are doing in their supervisor's opinion.

5. *Opportunities for peer support* so that people who feel strange, even alienated from the world at large, will gain strength and understanding from one another. Job Path has found that even the most gifted

professional cannot offer the kind of assistance that mentally retarded people can provide each other.

The five elements of supported work are embedded in the program of transitional employment that Job Path offers its trainees, for up to a year, preparing them step by step for stable jobs in the conventional labor market. Since the trainees entering the program have had a decidedly limited work history, if, indeed, they have ever worked at all, the first step is designed to teach them good work habits as well as the basics of a useful skill. Job Path places every participant in a public sector agency (with the minimum wage salary paid by CETA) where he or she may remain for up to six months. To develop an appropriate skill some trainees may be placed in more than one public sector agency during this time; other trainees, however, may require a relatively brief period of time with only one agency.

When our participants show increasing ability to cope with the demands of work, they move into the second step of the transitional employment program. Still receiving the minimum wage salary, they are placed for further training in the private sector where there are more opportunities for unsubsidized employment. Some trainees are hired by the first firm that has provided the training while other trainees require training with two or three or four private sector companies before they are ready to be hired. Regardless of whether Job Path is using public or private sector training sites, we try to match the trainee's skills, personality, and potential to the needs of a given agency or firm.

Job Path participants are assigned a job counselor who visits them on both public and private sector sites to see how they are coping with gradually increasing demands. The counselor also provides each trainee with an hour of individual counseling weekly in order to help develop good work habits and skills and to provide regular evaluation and feedback of the trainee's progress.

Since the counselor also meets every other week with the person at the trainee's work site who is responsible for supervising the trainee, the counselor is in a position to encourage firm but sympathetic supervision. These joint sessions also alert the counselor to small problems so that they can be addressed promptly, thereby preventing them from becoming larger ones.

In addition to receiving professional support, trainees also receive peer support in weekly group meetings of 10-12 program participants. The director of job counseling leads these groups at which time trainees share common concerns about work-related problems and develop strategies for handling them.

Throughout the time that Job Path trainees participate in the program they are on the Vera Institute's payroll and are paid a minimum wage salary on an hourly basis. The trainees do not consider themselves to be truly hired, however - nor does Job Path - until they graduate from the program and receive a salary from the organization for which they will be working on an unsubsidized basis. In this manual, therefore, we shall use the term *hired* to refer to conventional employment and not to the stage when trainees are on Vera's payroll.

Hirings occur in two ways. In many instances what begins as a training opportunity turns into unsubsidized employment. Job Path participants simply

roll over from their status as "trainees" to their new status as "employees" at the firm which has been training them. In fact, two out of three private sector employers who have provided subsidized training have subsequently hired their trainees for unsubsidized jobs.

In other instances firms hire Job Path trainees who have received training elsewhere. In those cases we speak of *direct hires*. Regardless of whether conventional employment results from a roll over or from a direct hire, Job Path provides all former trainees with counseling services that are gradually reduced over the course of a year.

The underlying principles of supported work and the components of the Job Path transitional employment program have had positive results. People who had been thought to be unemployable now fill important needs in their own lives. Job Path would, therefore, like the lessons it has learned to be widely shared.

2. Needs Assessment

If you are considering establishing a transitional employment program such as Job Path, you will need to define the population with which you plan to work. Job Path was developed to provide services to moderately, mildly, and borderline retarded youths and adults who have had a poor work history. Although the Job Path approach may apply to a number of hard-to-employ groups, we suggest that you limit your program initially to one such population.

Having identified your target group, you will then need to do a *needs assessment* to make certain that a substantial number of people would benefit from the kind of transitional employment program you intend to provide and that no existing agency is currently providing the service(s) in question. Most experts agree that statistical projections are the least rewarding route to follow. The information may appear to be precise, because it is expressed numerically, but, if you are dealing with a handicapped population, the figure is nothing more than a "guesstimate." Some people are never diagnosed and some are diagnosed incorrectly. What's more, if an individual uses more than one available service, he or she will be counted as a separate person for every service used.

We suggest that you simply contact the agencies in your area who are currently providing services for the population you have in mind. In so doing you will accomplish three purposes:

1. You will have some basis for determining the minimum number of people who may need a transitional employment program.

2. You will know whether any existing agency provides that service or any other vocational service. Indeed, you will learn about the whole range of services that exist for the population you intend to serve, and about gaps in services as well.

3. You will develop a professional relationship or enhance an existing one with key people in the referral agencies with which you anticipate working.

Instead of confining your contacts to the mail and the telephone, it is a good idea to visit other agencies to get a clear idea about potential participants. Visiting is also a useful way of letting your colleagues know how you expect to operate your program. Even if you represent an established agency, you will still need to let others know that you are providing a new service.

In addition to determining the need for your program, you will want to look at the kinds of services you will need to provide for participants. If your area does not have adequate public transportation, you will need to grapple with alternative modes of travel before you can establish a transitional employment program. Is there a non-profit agency in your community that provides buses or vans that you might use? Is there a college nearby whose students might be willing to drive your clients for a reasonable fee? Could

you organize a crew of retired citizens who might provide transportation, if they were properly reimbursed?

We have focused on transportation because it was not a consideration in New York City, but you will want to do a careful assessment of all of the needs of your participants and the community in which they live in order to determine the scope of service that your transitional employment program will provide.

3. Advisory Committee

Establishing a network of colleagues

If you are planning a program that departs from approaches traditionally used with your target population, it is essential to involve the leadership in the field you are about to enter. If yours is an established agency that is going to embark on a new program that will challenge widely held assumptions, it is also important that you enlist the help and support of key people whom you already know or will need to get to know.

The Vera Institute of Justice had no experience with mentally retarded youths and adults at the time it was planning to create Job Path. Vera had considerable experience, however, in operating supported work programs with other chronically unemployed populations. It was clear that Job Path would have to adapt the components of supported work to the special needs of mentally retarded people.

To learn what those special needs might be and to enlist the interest of leaders in the field of mental retardation, government, and industry, Vera established an *Advisory Committee* while Job Path was still on the drawing board. From the vantage point of two year's experience, Job Path urges every innovative program to establish an Advisory Committee. You may find, as we later did, that an Advisory Committee of professionals in the particular field with which you are concerned and a separate *Job Advisory Board* of business men and women makes better sense than a single group that attempts to blend the two.

If the professional leadership is not consulted, it may resist your efforts, decline to refer clients to your program, and attempt to discourage funding sources from assisting you. If the leadership is consulted, however, it is likely to encourage you in your efforts, and some of your advisors may reevaluate the policies and practices of their own agencies.

To establish an Advisory Committee you need to identify the key agencies in your field, be it mental retardation, hearing impairment, physical disability, or whatever. *Then, approach each agency individually to inform its leadership of your program.* If you try to save time by assembling people from a number of agencies, you may find yourself surrounded by a group that becomes united in its opposition to what it collectively views as an alien approach.

When you go to talk with people in an agency, remember that you are also going to listen and to learn. Since Job Path was new to the field of mental retardation, we needed all the background we could absorb. Even if you consider yourself a veteran in your field, however, it is important to learn from their experience. They will appreciate your openness, and you will deepen your understanding.

We think you will find that an Advisory Committee can serve many purposes; initially, we turned to it for help in determining eligibility criteria for entrance into Job Path. Since our trainees are all referred by other agencies, we need to provide these sources with appropriate guidelines. The Advisory Committee also helped us determine the length of time trainees should be

permitted to stay in Job Path and acted as a sounding board as we added or modified program components.

If you are providing a program for a population which is new to you, the Advisory Committee can help identify ancillary services and specific instructional material for training. Since some of the committee may be familiar with potential funding sources, individual members can be helpful in providing access to key individuals within those agencies. By including heads of agencies that provide service to your population you will be able to increase the number of referral agencies as word of your program spreads.

In sum, an Advisory Committee can share insights, and understanding, while offering help and support as you shape your program and develop it.

4. Funding Your Program

In order to establish a program like Job Path, you will need to develop a budget and then get your budget funded.

DEVELOPING A BUDGET

Costs will vary according to the size and location of your program, but, regardless, you will need to think in terms of funding for staff salaries and fringe benefits. Even the smallest staff should include a sufficient number of people to handle the following areas of responsibility: directing the program, developing jobs, counseling trainees, and assisting on administrative tasks. For a supported work program that begins with subsidized job placements, you will also need to arrange for funding for trainee salaries and benefits. Be sure to include the travel expenses that your staff will incur, as well as money to reimburse trainees for travel when they attend group meetings each week.

You will also need funding for some, if not all, of the following OTPS (other than personnel services): rent, telephones, insurance, supplies, equipment, and office maintenance. (To assist you in your planning, we have included a sample budget at the end of this section.)

GETTING YOUR BUDGET FUNDED

At this stage, structuring a funding strategy is essential. There are three broad categories of potential funding--public sources, private foundations and corporations, and income derived from services. The first two categories are self-explanatory; however, the third, income from services, requires some explanation. This income is earned from the money which private sector employers pay to your program for the work trainees perform. It is analogous to the fee that firms pay to an agency that provides temporary help. In such an arrangement, the trainee or the temporary worker is on the payroll of the agency, not of the work site.

As a first step in formulating your funding strategy, you should be prepared to do a good deal of research into the specific funding sources that are available to your program. While we cannot predict what you will discover, we can offer some guidance as to where to look and what you may find.

In the public sector, funds are available at the federal, state, and local government levels. Currently the largest source of public monies is *CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act)*. CETA offices are generally part of the Department of Employment or Department of Labor, at each level of government. CETA operates under seven different titles, and it is worthwhile to familiarize yourself with each title to determine which grants are most appropriate for your program.

While CETA is a major potential source of funding, other public sources can also provide vital monies. You will certainly want to work with the Vocational Rehabilitation programs at the federal and state levels. Within the

federal government, the Special Projects for the Handicapped program is a potential funding source. On a state level, Vocational Rehabilitation offices *(OVR or DVR)* can provide funds for the salaries of staff persons who furnish such direct services as job development and counseling under the Rehabilitation Workshop Support Program *(RWSP)*. As a guide, OVR/DVR publishes a list of job categories eligible for funding, and indicates the education and experience requirements for these positions. (Since Vocational Rehabilitation programs provide a wide range of services for the handicapped, you will want to establish good liaisons not only for potential funding but also for referrals. *See OUTREACH.*)

In addition to these Vocational Rehabilitation programs, you should be aware of special funds such as the Innovation and Expansion Grants *(I&E)*. You may find, as we did, that the Vocational Rehabilitation office area manager can help you identify potential I&E funding.

Government funding may also be available through the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services (the agencies which have been created to replace the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare). The regional offices of these agencies can be of special assistance in identifying potential grants. One further source may be the Department of Health, or its equivalent, within each state, since these agencies generally have special offices which address the needs of the mentally retarded.

In addition, the *Federal Register*, a daily publication listing regulations and notices issued by federal agencies, provides information on national grants. Consult your local public library to find out if it receives the daily *Federal Register* and the accompanying monthly index. As another means of keeping informed on government grants, you will also want to be included on the lists that government agencies compile when they issue requests for proposals *(RFP)* for your target population.

While most programs can operate on public monies alone, we suggest that you approach private foundations and corporations as well, for they can provide valuable and flexible supplements to your initial funds. For example, the conditions under which many public grants are awarded require that you find other funding for 10%-30% of the total amount you seek. Private sources can provide these matching funds. Private funds can also be used to cover additional staff, new equipment, or unexpected expenses.

In addition to researching the major foundations, you should find out about the private foundations within your state; these can be identified through foundation directories available at many public libraries. Another reference resource is the *Foundation Center* which has offices located throughout the country.

As you identify potential funding sources, you will also want to begin developing relationships with interested people at each. This will increase your chances of success in obtaining adequate funding, as these people may be in a position to make the funding decisions, or at least to lend support to your proposal. Developing a network of sponsorship is useful - perhaps essential - for funding a new or innovative program.

As you research and develop your funding strategy, you will probably thread through a number of possible sources, trying to pick and choose the most appropriate ones for your program. As a general guide, we suggest building a network of sources which offer the largest grants. You should be able to find out what an average grant may be from each source. To guide you in preparing your own funding request, agencies and foundations are often willing to let you review successful past proposals.

When you know what monies you can expect to receive, you can determine what funds are still required to be used as matching grants or to cover remaining expenses. In making this evaluation, you will also want to take into account whatever income from services your program may earn. When a private sector site is developed, a contract is negotiated whereby an employer agrees to pay part or all of the minimum wage to the supported work program for the services provided by a program participant. (In some cases, a training site employer may pay even more than the minimum wage to cover the cost of fringe benefits.) Since the program pays a trainee's salary out of money received from its funding source(s), the money paid by the employer can be regarded as earned income for the supported work program.

Multiple funding requires extensive paperwork including detailed budgets and narrative program descriptions, as well as audits and on-site visits. Nonetheless, we think multiple funding offers some distinct advantages. As we noted, you will have additional flexibility in using your funds. Further, by not being dependent on a narrow concentration of funds, your program is not devastated by the loss of any one funding source.

As you embark on your quest for funding, we want to leave you with two key words - persistence and presentation. Doggedly research your sources, approach them with your plans, and impress them with the importance of your program.

SAMPLE BUDGET ITEMS

Personnel Expenditures

Staff Salaries and Benefits:

Project Director

Program Coordinator

Job Developer(s)

Senior Counselor

Job Counselor(s)

Administrative Assistant

Participants Salaries and Benefits

O.T.P.S. Expenses

Rent

Utilities

Telephone

Equipment

Office Expenditures

Office Supplies

Insurance

Staff Travel

Trainee Travel

Duplicating

Postage

Consultants

Periodicals/Training Materials

Office Maintenance

Miscellaneous

5. Outreach/Intake

Introducing your program to referral agencies and interviewing applicants

In order to establish a transitional employment program similar to Job Path's, you will need to make contact with the rehabilitation community while your project is still in the planning stage. We recommend that you visit the local office of your state's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (the precise title varies from state to state), the division of your school system that serves handicapped students, sheltered workshops, and other groups providing your target population with services such as housing and recreation. These early visits will enable you to establish relationships with referral counselors and concurrently help you determine the nature of existing services, the gaps in those services, and the approximate size of the population you intend to serve. *(See NEEDS ASSESSMENT.)*

During your initial visit to organizations that compose the rehabilitation community you will want to discuss your basic ideas about transitional employment and your preliminary thinking about eligibility criteria for your program. You will know at the outset, for example, that the clients who are referred to you must be old enough to work a full week without violating state law, but you may not have decided whether there will be a cut-off age. You will know what primary disability you are preparing to work with but you may not yet know what your policy will be toward people with secondary disabilities. If you are planning a transitional employment program for a mentally retarded population, for example, will you also admit people who function on a retarded level in some basic areas because of minimal brain dysfunction, neurological impairment, brain injury, developmental disabilities, and the like? As your program takes shape and you have formulated your intake policies more clearly, you will need to make return visits or follow-up calls to the same organizations. Outreach is never a single process.

You will also need to return from time to time because the referral counselors whom you meet in September may not be with the same agency in May, and those who have remained may have forgotten some of what you said. Moreover, within a matter of months you will have literature describing your program and data documenting the number of people you have accepted, and the number and nature of your subsidized and unsubsidized placements. Referral agencies have a keen interest in the outcomes your program is able to report.

When Job Path was getting underway two years ago, we had established contact with ten referral agencies; that number has grown to 99. New York City has many more agencies than smaller communities, of course, but interest is likely to escalate elsewhere, too. In the spring of 1980 Job Path opened a satellite office on Staten Island, the least urban part of New York City; Staten Island has a population of 353,000 people and resembles cities of a similar size in various parts of the United States far more than it resembles the rest of New York City. As the director of the Staten Island unit began visiting existing programs for the mentally retarded, she discovered that word of Job Path's satellite office had spread far and wide. Within six weeks of having first put her key in the lock, she was able to invite 50 representatives from 31 agencies to an afternoon open house.

You will find that establishing and maintaining good rapport with referral groups serves many purposes over and above developing sources of appropriate participants for your program. To begin with, you will be able to serve your trainees more effectively. A Job Path trainee, for example, had developed the practice of arriving late to work. By a cooperative effort our job counselor and the counselor from the residence that had referred the trainee were able to help her learn how to allow sufficient time to get to work promptly.

In addition, on-going communication enables you to fill training sites that your job developers find, when your program lacks an appropriate trainee. When our job developers came up with four mailroom sites at a time when we had only three trainees who could read, our intake supervisor was able to call a number of referral agencies with whom she maintained frequent contact; within a short time she had found a fourth person.

One of the questions you will have to resolve is whether you will accept parent referrals and self-referrals in addition to agency referrals. We found at Job Path that our funding sources require documentation that our population is mentally retarded. Since we do not administer intelligence tests ourselves, we rely on the documentation our referral agencies provide. Consequently, our policy is to send non-agency referrals to the nearest OVR office where a counselor fills out our referral application with all necessary data.

Our *eligibility criteria*, listed at the end of this chapter, include eight items of which mental retardation in the borderline to moderate range is only one. The remainder are designed to help Job Path attract trainees who have the potential for competitive employment but who could not realize that potential without the support system we provide during the transitional employment process. Our most frequent reason for rejecting an applicant, incidentally, stems from our belief that he or she is already capable of handling a conventional job, and needs job placement rather than our program of supported work.

Few people are rejected and no one is accepted on the basis of the information on the referral form. One, and sometimes two, intake interviews are necessary in order to assess a candidate's suitability. We have found, for example, that we can teach job skills and work habits, but we cannot instill motivation, so we try to screen out people with negative attitudes toward work. We also try to screen out applicants with severe psychological problems. One young man, for example, arrived at our office carrying a lead pipe "for protection," thereby evidencing problems that our program is not equipped to handle.

The intake interview also offers an opportunity to begin to develop an *individualized plan of training* for the applicants whom you accept. You may find that one candidate for your program does not want a job that would have him or her sitting in an office all day long, whereas another applicant clearly prefers sedentary work. Some people are loners and others are sociable. Some candidates have health problems that limit heavy lifting, bending or standing. If you are dealing with a mentally retarded population, you will discover that some can read and some cannot. All of these variables are significant in matching participants to training sites. You will greatly enhance the likelihood of success if you do a careful match of trainee and site as a result of the information you learn during your intake interview(s).

As we indicated in the section on *STAFFING,* there is no one correct model to follow in deciding who should do your intake interviewing. Someone will have to supervise intake, however, in order to establish and maintain uniform standards. Moreover, referral counselors will need to have the name of one person whom they can call, when they have questions to ask. Since supervising intake is not a full-time job, however, the person who fills that position will also have other responsibilities. The precise nature of those responsibilities will vary from program to program, and there is a wide range of options. Regardless of what you decide, we urge you to give outreach and intake careful consideration.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. Evaluated as *mentally retarded* in the moderate to borderline ranges.

2. *At least 17 years old* - no upper age limit.

3. Potential for competitive employment - as determined by supervisor and counselor evaluations and work performances, if available.

4. *No severe medical problems* that would impede a person's working ability. If on medication, the ability to be responsible for self-medication.

5. *No recent history of inappropriate behavior*; i.e., violent, acting out, psychotic, etc.

6. *Unemployed* (will accept history of unsuccessful past employment).

7. Interest and *motivation in working.*

8. *Ability to travel independently* and/or ability to learn new routes.

6. Staffing Your Program

Your program will be as strong or as weak, as creative or as sterile, as sensitive or as callous, as flexible or as rigid as your director and the staff that he or she is able to recruit and develop. Before such recruiting begins, however, it is important to think through the executive functions, the direct services to clients, and the indirect program services that you will need to operate your program.

It should become clear at the outset that no one person can handle all of the executive responsibilities, but there is no set way to divide them. Consider some of the responsibilities:

- Drawing up a budget and getting it funded
- Providing fiscal and program reports to funding agencies on a regular basis
- Establishing program goals and strategies for reaching them
- Implementing the strategies and evaluating them regularly
- Designing and introducing necessary changes in the program
- Recruiting, supervising and evaluating a staff
- Developing techniques which enable staff members to reach their full potential
- Introducing the leadership of your organization to colleagues in other agencies
- Coordinating public relations so that your program becomes known to key people in business and government
- Educating the community about the capabilities of your target population

The list could go on at further length, but the point is simply that no one person can possibly handle all of these responsibilities.

In deciding how to allocate assignments it is important to staff your program so that you tap people's strengths, while compensating for their weaknesses. Job Path is fortunate in having the Vera Institute of Justice as its parent body because Vera provides particular expertise in budgetary, fiscal, legal, and personnel matters. Indeed, Vera's fiscal department assumes full responsibility for supervising how project monies are spent and for filing financial reports with funding agencies. The project director of Job Path, therefore, is expected to concentrate on the day-to-day operation of the program.

Since Job Path outstations all of its trainees at work sites in the public or private sector, the program cannot be supervised from behind a desk. Its director makes a point of going into the field from time to time with job counselors, job developers, and follow-up counselors in order to become personally familiar with the training sites. Since the director brings a fresh eye to these visits, she may see things that have escaped notice and be able to come up with suggestions to improve the program.

The *table of organization* accompanying this section indicates how Job Path is staffed, but it is not intended to serve as a blueprint for staffing. We have concluded that, for the most part, there is no one ideal way of distributing assignments. This is especially the case with direct services.

You can have one person do intake, for example, or you can rotate it among selected counselors, with one person having supervisory responsibility. Similarly, you can have separate follow-up counselors or you can have each counselor do some follow-up, provided that you do not tack on follow-up as an afterthought - a mistake that Job Path made and had to correct. When your program is small, you will naturally want to distribute tasks differently from when you have doubled or tripled in size. It is erroneous, therefore, to think that there is one staffing pattern into which you must force your program.

If you follow the Job Path approach, however, you will have job developers who do not do counseling, and you will have job counselors who do not do job development. This is a distinct departure from the "placement counselor" approach in most sheltered workshops. Our experience indicates that job development skills must be learned, must be practiced, and when developed, must be skillfully applied. Moreover, full-time job developers are able to get to meet more personnel directors and supervisors than they could possibly do if they also carried a counseling caseload. They also get to know the needs of the competitive labor market and, therefore, do a professional job of marketing. By the same token, full-time counselors are able to visit trainees on each job site twice a week, to provide an hour a week of individual counseling, and to respond to crisis situations without having to worry about conflicting business appointments.

Job development and job counseling are equally essential to the Job Path model; neither could sustain the program without the other. Job developers arrange for the training sites in which our participants are placed during their time in the program and for the hiring that is expected to follow when trainees have learned appropriate social behavior, good work habits, and specific job skills. Job counselors provide the support system that makes such learning possible. Job developers turn training sites into actual jobs, and job counselors turn subsidized trainees into unsubsidized employees. We suggest, therefore, that your director of job development and your director of job counseling serve as co-equal assistants to the person who heads up your program. Together, these three people form a mini-cabinet to initiate ideas and address problems.

You will find that placement on training sites and on actual jobs works best when your director of job development and your director of job counseling work out plans together. One person knows the needs of every site and the other knows the needs of every trainee. Jointly, they are in an excellent position to select the most appropriate person for placement.

Moreover, by working together, they can overcome what would otherwise be a natural tension between job development and job counseling. When, after a great deal of hard work, a developer persuades an employer to accept a trainee, only to discover that there is no trainee who can fill the particular job at the time in question, the job developer is understandably frustrated and disturbed. By the same token, when a counselor enables a trainee to become job ready, motivated, indeed bursting to be hired, only to discover that there is no job in sight, the counselor is understandably frustrated and disturbed. But, when the director of job development and the director of job counseling work closely together, each can learn to appreciate the other's viewpoint. There is still frustration, of course, but it is a frustration that is mutually shared, rather than a case of "us" against "them."

We have given considerable thought to the qualifications that each staff position requires. It would be less complex if we could simply indicate the amount of education and the minimum number of years of experience that are desirable, but experience has taught us that such an approach is too narrow. A person may have all of the credentials and still not be a professional; conversely, a person may have relatively few credentials and be highly professional.

Some funding agencies have established fixed formulas for each position; in order to get their backing, you will have to comply with their requirements. Other agencies, however, allow you to use your own judgment in hiring, thereby freeing you to do the unconventional, as we have done at Job Path from time to time.

As a general rule of thumb, staff members who provide direct services need to be empathetic, articulate, intelligent, energetic individuals. Some would say that a college education is essential, but one of our counselors never completed college. Some would recommend that counselors also have a Masters degree in counseling, but several Job Path counselors never went to graduate school. Some would say that a job developer needs a good background in business or economics, but the person who has become our director of job development started as a junior job developer when she returned to work after many years of staying home, raising a family and doing volunteer work. Therefore, we hesitate to suggest requirements of these kinds for the direct service positions, unless, as we indicated before, a funding agency has established standards which you must meet.

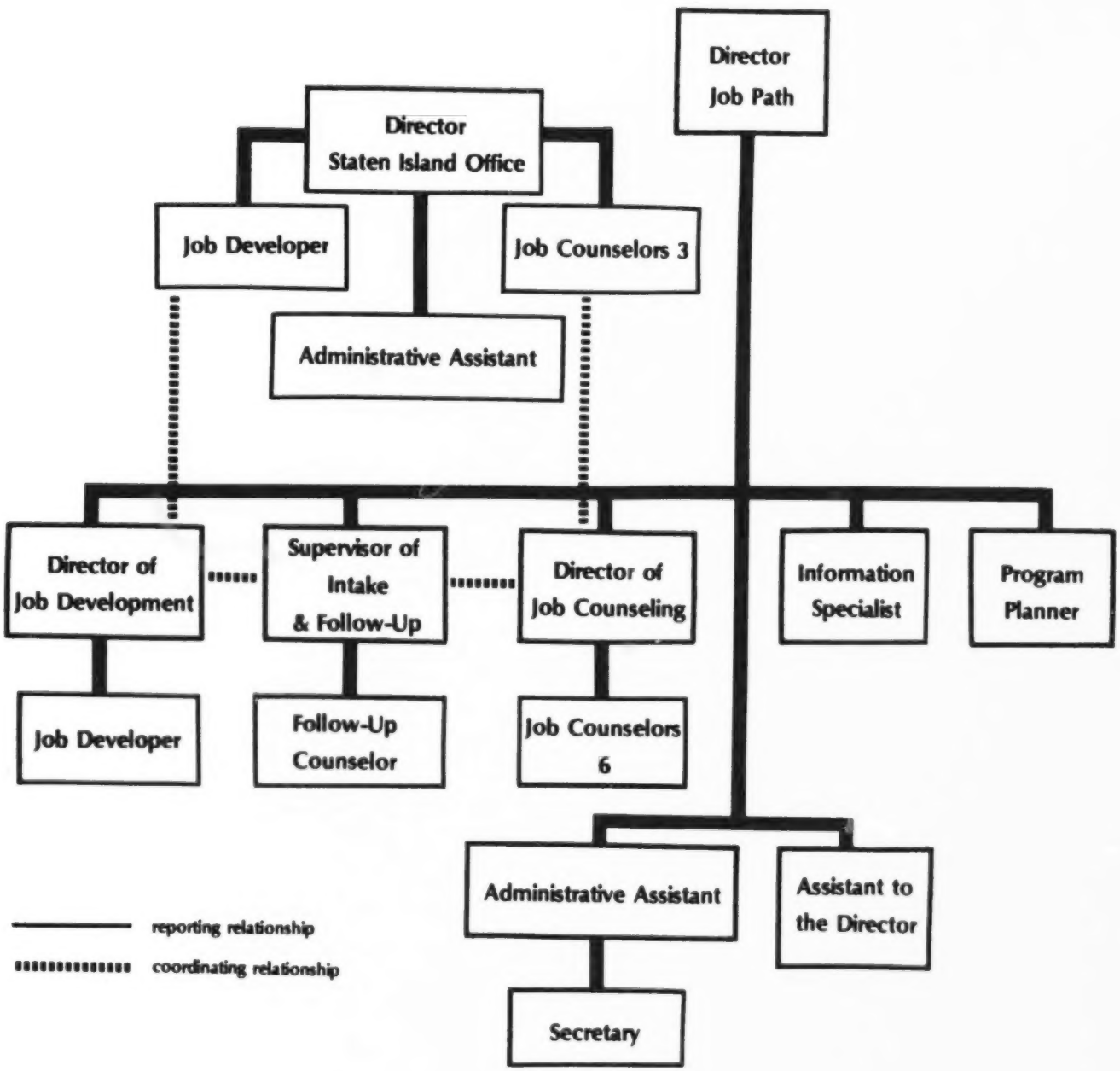
As you go about staffing your program, bear in mind that the people who are behind the scenes providing indirect services are also very important. You will need a staff to keep careful records, do thoughtful data analysis, write lucid reports, and provide the administrative, secretarial, and bookkeeping skills that enable a program to run smoothly.

The key to effective staffing is for your director and your line supervisors to do careful interviewing and to spend a good bit of time in staff development. At Job Path, the entire staff meets on a bi-weekly basis to exchange ideas and learn from each other. In addition, the supervisors have a scheduled weekly meeting with every member of their staffs. From time to time we invite outside experts to lead us in seminars on mental retardation, techniques of job development, and such.

You may want to have a crew of volunteers to supplement your paid staff. If your volunteer program is to be effective, it too will require careful supervision. Moreover, if your volunteers are student interns, their colleges or graduate schools may have specific requirements about the credentials of the person doing the supervising.

The time you spend on developing a high quality staff will be well worth your efforts. We urge you to maintain high standards and persevere until your staff meets your expectations.

ORGANIZATION CHART



7. Job Development

Finding training sites and arranging for competitive employment

The Job Path model places each trainee on real job assignments in public sector agencies and in private sector companies where he or she gradually learns the work habits and job skills that are prerequisite to being hired. Our job developers seek out appropriate training sites and arrange for the unsubsidized employment of job-ready trainees.

Despite the fact the public sector hiring opportunities are infrequent due to budget freezes, our job developers have found that public agencies have been the most plentiful source of initial training sites. Here, trainees have an opportunity to gain skills and self-confidence while public sector employers can have trainee salaries completely paid by CETA funds. Consequently, job development in this area has been greatly facilitated. In fact, in time your job developers are likely to find themselves with a waiting list of public sector employers who are eager to have your trainees to relieve the work load.

How do job developers select which public sites to use promptly and which to put toward the bottom of your list? The basic test is simple: they look for training in the skills that the private sector demands. When our job developers began coming up with business firms that were looking for messengers, for example, they started to seek out public sector sites that would provide the initial training in this area. The same approach applied to mailroom clerks, porters, file clerks, and such. *Since the public sector is primarily a training ground, make certain that you are training for the skills that are most in demand in the private sector which is likely to be the source of almost all future hiring.* It may be tempting to develop a pleasant public sector site where your trainees will learn to be teacher aides, but if the schools are not hiring such aides, resist the temptation. Before we learned that lesson at Job Path, we found ourselves with three "recreational aides" who were trained by the Parks Department - and whose skills were not transferable.

Although we have been emphasizing the needs of the marketplace, you must give equal consideration to the needs of your trainees. There is no point, for example, in developing a training site where data processing is the central task, if the people in your program are unable to acquire the necessary skills. However, you must be careful to distinguish between disabilities which can be overcome with special arrangements, and those that cannot be so handled. We had a man in our program, for example, who is only three and a half feet tall; but he had the ability to do both alphabetical and numerical filing, and could reach file cabinets by standing on a box. We have other trainees who do not have the cognitive ability to do filing, and there is no way we can compensate for the lack - other than to match them to different jobs. Thus, job developers have to understand the nature of your population and each individual's unique needs as these considerations relate to job performance.

Developing training sites in the private sector that will result in long term hiring is the ultimate test of a good job developer. To be successful he or she will have to understand how every aspect of your program works, be personally convinced of its worth to employers, and be able to communicate that conviction. Your job developers will also have to understand the strengths

and weaknesses of the trainees. A strong marketing approach is to underscore the fact that people who have experienced difficulty in being accepted in the labor market often value their jobs more than most workers. Consequently, employers can expect your trainees to be more punctual than the norm, to have a better attendance record, and to remain with the company well after people who take jobs for granted have departed. As your program progresses, your job developers will be able to back up these points with statistics and anecdotes.

Job development is a time-consuming process. In staffing, a ratio of one job developer to every 25 trainees has worked well for us, but you may need to alter the ratio, depending on the severity of the problems your population faces, the number of participants a training site can accommodate, and the relative availability of potential employers. A typical Job Path trainee has needed to be placed on three training sites before being hired, but there are always atypical trainees to be considered. Some have been employed by the first training site, while others have required as many as six placements.

In seeking placements with private sector employers, Job Path has used three fiscal approaches:

1. Some companies agree to provide partially subsidized work experience for trainees without making a firm commitment to hire them. (When our funding contracts are negotiated each year, we make sure that a portion of the funding is available for payment of these subsidies.) These trainees remain on the Vera Institute's payroll and the companies are billed for their share of the minimum wage salary - typically between 85% and 90% of the total - with Vera paying the difference. Some companies like this approach because they have an opportunity to see how a handicapped person works without having to put that person on their payroll. Interestingly, within three months, two out of three companies that have taken this approach have wound up hiring the trainees in question.

2. Some firms prefer signing an on-the-job training *(OJT)* contract for a specified period of weeks. Under its terms, the trainee is on the company's payroll. Through OJT funding provided by CETA, Vera reimburses the company for 50% of the trainee's salary for up to 16 weeks. An OJT agreement, therefore, is initially more financially advantageous to the company than a work experience arrangement. However, an OJT contract means that the firm has committed itself to hire the trainee, assuming, of course, that he or she meets the company's standards. It also means that the trainee is on the company's payroll from the first day of training.

3. Some companies prefer to hire a trainee directly and receive no subsidy whatsoever. In their view, the bookkeeping is more trouble than it is worth.

These three arrangements are different from a fiscal point of view, but not from a programmatic one. Regardless of the alternative an employer selects, the program will still supply a counselor who will visit the site and provide a support system for the trainee and his or her supervisor. *(See COUNSELING TRAINEES and FOLLOW-UP.)*

There are some simple tools that make job development easier. When marketing your program, your job developers would do well to bring along a packet to give the person with whom they are dealing. Such a packet includes a succinct statement explaining what your program is all about and a brief description of the jobs your trainees are capable of doing. After a while your job developers will have a description of the jobs your trainees are actually performing, a list of training sites, a list of firms and agencies that have hired trainees, letters from satisfied employers, and statistics on job retention. A packet of this sort serves to indicate to employers that your trainees are competent, dependable workers who will be an asset to the company in question.

Not everything can be packaged so neatly, however. In addition to explaining the importance of the counseling service that you supply, your job developers will need to discuss with an employer the role of the supervisor whom he or she selects to oversee your trainee. Under no circumstances does Job Path accept a site at an agency or company which cannot offer a member of its staff to supervise a trainee. Supervision is essential since our participants need daily guidance to learn work assignments and cope with the pressures of a job.

We have learned that a reluctant supervisor who has the program imposed on his or her department will, consciously or otherwise, make it impossible for trainee(s) to succeed. Therefore, it is essential that the firm select a supervisor who is interested in your program. If your job developers determine that certain companies are willing to accept your trainees, but that current openings are with the wrong supervisors, it is worthwhile to wait until an appropriate supervisor has an opening. Job Path waited six months for that to occur in one firm, but the supervisor we finally got proved to be excellent and our trainee was rolled over in short order. An excellent supervisor oversees a trainee in a sympathetic but firm manner, introduces new tasks gradually, and provides regular evaluation and feedback. *(For further information on this subject, see SUPERVISOR ORIENTATION.)*

If a company expresses interest in hiring a trainee, the question of interviewing a trainee is likely to come up. In our experience, trainees do not always project well on an interview since they are unaccustomed to the interview process. Our job developers explain this to personnel directors and stress the care with which we match a trainee to the precise needs that the company's supervisor indicates at the time of the supervisor orientation. If a personnel director still requests an interview, we ask that a counselor be permitted to accompany the trainee on an interview, and most firms accept this procedure. (On the rare occasions when a company resists having a counselor present at an interview, of course we respect the firm's wishes.)

Job development is hard work. It usually takes several telephone calls merely to reach the individual in personnel whom your job developer is trying to contact. You will be doing well if one telephone conversation in ten results in an appointment and if one appointment in four results in establishing a new site. Even then, there will be times when you do not have a trainee to fit the needs of the potential employer.

Once you have broken into a particular field, however, job development becomes somewhat easier. It took us eight months to get a law firm to agree

to give a Job Path trainee some work experience. In the following year ten more law firms accepted Job Path participants for training in positions in areas such as alphabetical filing, porter/maintenance, mailroom/messenger, and duplicating. Eight of the ten firms have hired the people whom they have trained. When one of our job developers approaches another law firm and shows the list of firms where Job Path is currently active, it is more likely that our program will be welcomed. Thus, the hardest part of job development is arranging for the first opportunity in a given field.

Satisfied employers will help your job developers. If you have a trainee who is doing well in a bank or a hotel, for example, it is a good idea for your job developers to ask if the personnel director would be willing to introduce them to colleagues in other banks or hotels. Such introductions are invaluable, because it is much easier for a job developer to call someone and say, "Joe Smith of XYZ company suggested that I call you," than to call cold.

Another way of avoiding the cold call is to establish a Job Advisory Board which is composed of leaders in a number of fields. It was through the intervention of two people on our Job Advisory Board that Job Path was able to break into the hotel industry, and through the intervention of a third advisor that we were able to establish a foothold in three branches of a major New York City department store. Our Job Advisory Board has also critiqued our marketing brochures and offered suggestions that have improved the presentation that our job developers make.

No one can help your job developers more than the trainees themselves. By doing their jobs well, your trainees will be a day-in day-out advertisement for your agency.

8. Supervisor Orientation

Acquainting supervisors with your program and learning their needs

If you choose to follow Job Path's approach, you will be working with a great many different training site supervisors who have one thing in common - none of them are in your employ. Supervisors work for public agencies, business firms, or nonprofit organizations that are providing training sites. Despite the fact that supervisors are not on your payroll, you will find that their impact can affect whether a trainee succeeds or fails. Because the supervisor plays such a central role, we emphasize the importance of a process that we call *supervisor orientation*.

As the title of this section suggests, supervisor orientation actually serves a dual purpose. In Job Path's case it enables supervisors to understand the capabilities and needs of mentally retarded workers. At the same time, however, it enables us to understand the exact nature of each training site. As a result of these understandings, supervisors are more likely to establish sensible and sensitive expectations, and Job Path is more likely to select an appropriate trainee for each site. Regardless of the particular population with which you are working, supervisor orientation can serve the same dual function for you.

By arranging with the personnel department to visit the specific training site under consideration, you can get an indication of whether it provides trainees with skills that are marketable in your community; if it does not, it is usually a good idea to reject that training site - unless you want to use it briefly so that the trainee(s) can learn the importance of punctuality, attendance, and other work habits before being moved to a different training site.

A personal visit will also enable you to find out whether a relatively unpressured full day's work is being offered. If the work environment is particularly pressured, we have found it is a poor one for mentally retarded workers and we, therefore, have learned to reject it. If there seems to be too much work for one person, we suggest placing a second trainee there, provided there is enough work for two. Sometimes there is not even enough work for one person, in which case we try to arrange for other tasks to be included. If that is not possible, on rare occasions we try to reduce the number of hours, and use that site for a trainee who happens to need a part-time position.

During the supervisor orientation you can also sense something about the quality of supervision. A supervisor will ultimately be responsible for a trainee's performance. Therefore, when an employer designates one person who has both the necessary time and interest to be your trainee's supervisor, there is a good likelihood that your trainee will acquire desirable work habits as well as specific job skills. Not every situation is that ideal, of course; sometimes there are too many supervisors, and at other times there is one supervisor who has insufficient time or interest to oversee your trainee. On rare occasions we learn there will be no supervisor whatsoever; we reject such training sites and recommend that you do likewise.

The more information you can gather about a training site, the more likely it is that you will be able to place a trainee appropriately. Does a mailroom position require heavy lifting? Does it require doing outside messenger work? What other tasks are going to be assigned to the trainee who will be clearing tables in a cafeteria? If they include other kitchen jobs like making coffee and cutting cakes and pies, you will assign a different trainee than you would assign to what are essentially porter-maintenance tasks. Even a job as seemingly clear-cut as filing needs to be questioned. Does it involve numerical filing, alphabetical filing, or both? The questions that we raise relate to the abilities of mentally retarded people; if you are working with different populations, you will have different questions, but the underlying principle of matching trainees to training sites holds true.

Thus far we have been focusing on what you can learn during supervisor orientation; it is also important to consider what the supervisor can learn. At Job Path we found that supervisors who had never worked with mentally retarded people were, understandably, quite anxious at the prospect. Supervisors would probably feel a similar anxiety about any "special" population. We also found, however, that supervisors' anxiety was considerably relieved when they learned during the orientation meeting that a job counselor would visit the site at least twice a week to pick up on small problems and address them promptly. It is important to emphasize your staff's availability. If a supervisor is having difficulty with a trainee, there is no need to wait for the next scheduled counselor visit; supervisors should feel free to call your program whenever necessary. At Job Path we have yet to be troubled by an overanxious supervisor's calling too frequently, whereas we have encountered problems when a supervisor refrained from calling in order not to "bother" us.

Supervisor orientation has offered us an ideal opportunity to talk candidly about what can and should be expected from mentally retarded workers. Some supervisors might have been too accepting of shoddy work and others might have been too demanding at the outset, were it not for the information that they acquired during orientation. (Some supervisors continue to make these mistakes after orientation, but our job counselors are sensitive to extremes in judgment and work with supervisors in establishing a more balanced outlook.) Although Job Path's experience has been with supervisors who are training mentally retarded workers, we believe our experiences are likely to hold true for supervisors who are asked to work with other special populations.

We have purposely refrained from suggesting which staff person should do your orientation, because there are many ways of staffing a supported work program like Job Path. What is essential, however, is that a staff person be designated to fulfill this responsibility, and that this staff person have a significant input in matching trainees to training sites.

While we feel that the person doing supervisor orientation should emphasize to supervisors your program's strengths, we are not implying that you gloss over your trainee's weaknesses. You will want the supervisor to know that trainees often lack confidence initially and may be shy. However, be sure to stress that with guidance and training most trainees will learn to do the job as competently as any other worker. You can add that if, in a reasonable period of time, a trainee does not meet the performance level required by the job, he or she will be replaced by another person from the program, and a more suitable site will be found for the trainee who did not work out.

Replacements of this sort can usually be avoided, however, if you ask supervisors to provide trainees and job counselors with frequent feedback. In the course of providing supervisor orientation your staff person should emphasize the importance of candid evaluations, explaining that dismissing problems is a disservice to the trainee, the counselor, and, of course, to the supervisor himself or herself, because uncorrected problems are likely to become more irritating over time.

When a supervisor realizes that you value candor, he or she is likely to raise a common question, "What should I tell the workers in my department?" If your agency is dealing with a visible handicap, co-workers can see the disability for themselves, but mental retardation is not always apparent. At Job Path we tell supervisors that they know their department better than we do. If, in their judgment, telling co-workers that a new employee is retarded will serve to create a barrier or will make the new person seem "different," it is best to say nothing. On the other hand, if telling co-workers is likely to result in an added effort on their part to be helpful and friendly, it would be wise to share the fact that their new co-worker learns a little more slowly than they do.

We do not mean to suggest in this section that a solid job of supervisor orientation will solve all potential problems in one fell swoop. What it will do, however, is provide supervisors with initial understandings at the same time that it lays the groundwork for your job counselors, and helps you match the most appropriate trainee to the training sites that you decide to accept.

9. Counseling Trainees

Two groups benefit from job counseling: trainees and supervisors. Inexperienced in dealing with the world of work, trainees need help in learning how to cope with its demands, how to respond to supervision and evaluation, how to interact with non-retarded workers, even how to dress appropriately. Inexperienced in dealing with handicapped workers, supervisors need help in striking a sensible and sensitive balance between firmness and understanding, and in knowing what they can and should expect. Thus, trainees and supervisors both need supports that your job counselors can provide.

At Job Path we provide these supports in four ways:

1. Job counselors visit the training sites on a regular basis to observe the trainee at work and to talk briefly with him or her.

2. Job counselors meet regularly with the supervisor to discuss progress and problems.

3. Job counselors provide individual counseling for each trainee.

4. The director of job counseling meets regularly with groups of ten to twelve trainees.

Determining the optimum frequency for these four kinds of support is important. Before Job Path got underway, its parent body, the Vera Institute of Justice, initiated an eight-week pilot project in which a full-time counselor was stationed at each of the two training sites that the project was using. In a few weeks it became apparent that neither the trainees nor the supervisors needed a counselor's continuous presence. We have found that two visits a week to a training site are usually sufficient and that an hour a week of group counseling works well for us. You may find that a different number of hours is better for your population. In adapting the Job Path model to your needs, we suggest that you determine the number of hours you will need for these four supports. In order to do so, you will need to understand the purposes underlying a counselor's visits to a training site and the functions served by individual consultations with trainees and with supervisors. You will also need to understand the needs that group meetings are designed to serve.

TRAINING SITE VISITS

By observing trainees in a real work situation the counselor develops firsthand knowledge of the skills that the trainee is supposed to be learning, detects the ease or difficulty with which each task is being accomplished, notes the trainee's speed and accuracy, and gets a sense of when the trainee is ready to take on new assignments. The counselor makes a point of noticing whether the trainee asks questions of his or her supervisor when in doubt and of assessing the overall quality of rapport between trainee and supervisor. Similarly, the counselor becomes aware of how the trainee interacts with coworkers. Does he or she talk to them? Go to lunch with them? Join them in staff functions such as birthday parties and going away parties? In sum, is he or she considered a part of the group?

Firsthand information is important, indeed essential, for every job counselor. Recently, for example, a Job Path trainee complained that he was being teased by a co-worker. Because the counselor was familiar with the training site, she was able to help the trainee recognize the difference between playful joking and malicious teasing - and to respond accordingly.

Another trainee complained that he was bored. The counselor noticed that the trainee was sorting mail in half the time he had needed a month ago. Clearly, the trainee either had to have more tasks assigned to him or else he needed to be moved to a more challenging site. As a result of frequent training site visits, job counselors are able to judge when a trainee is ready to be moved from the public sector to the private sector, and when the time is ripe for an unsubsidized hire.

In preparing your job counselors for training site visits, it is a good idea to emphasize that counselors are not there to supervise trainees directly. The job counselors' function is to observe so skillfully that they can provide effective supports for supervisors and trainees. Job counselors become so familiar with each site that they can also provide direct training when necessary. What's more, counselors' observations can help your program decide when to continue using a training site and when not to.

CONFERENCES WITH SUPERVISORS

Concerned that our counselors might be viewed as interlopers, Job Path had originally made the mistake of having counselors meet with supervisors on a "catch as catch can" basis. This often resulted in counselors being hurriedly told that everything was "fine." It became obvious, however, that "fine" often meant that small problems were being ignored until they became big problems. Hence the decision to arrange for regularly scheduled meetings. We find that meeting with a supervisor every other week is usually a sufficient supplement to the casual meetings that may occur in the course of visiting a training site.

As supervisors realize that a counselor is actively seeking constructive criticism, you will find that they are likely to become alert to seemingly minor irritations and to talk about them. Your counselors, in turn, will be able to offer constructive suggestions to both supervisors and trainees. At Job Path we have found that supervisors sometimes complain about trainees making "careless mistakes." In one instance a counselor felt that the supervisor was assigning too many new tasks before the trainee had mastered the basics; this counselor worked with the supervisor to so structure the job as to recognize the importance of graduated stress. In another instance, this same counselor felt that the careless mistakes were probably attributable to a trainee's being too tired to be efficient. Consequently, the counselor helped the trainee to determine how many hours sleep he needed during the week and to shift some of his social plans to the weekend.

Since supervisors are in the employ of the firm or agency with which your program is working, it is important to realize that the support and influence which your counselor exerts is dependent on good will, respect, and understanding.

INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING WITH EACH TRAINEE

The hour a week of individual counseling that counselors provide trainees at Job Path is directed at problems that may impede job performance. Counselors and trainees discuss difficulties that may have been noted at site visits and explore ways to improve the situation(s). Counseling may be as simple as suggesting that a trainee purchase an alarm clock to ensure punctuality at work or it may deal with an issue as complex as developing independence. The counseling provided at Job Path is work-oriented and geared to helping the trainee adapt to the conventional labor market.

Counselors are not psychiatrists or psychologists. If a trainee needs intensive personal counseling, we suggest that your counselors refer him or her to an appropriate clinic or therapist. Counselors are not older sisters or brothers, parents, or friends, and developing relationships of this sort will limit their effectiveness. Job counselors are well-trained professionals who focus on building a trainee's sense of self-worth and on reinforcing good work habits and skills so that the trainee will be hired and will then stay hired.

Your job counselors will be greatly assisted if their supervisor puts together a directory of ancillary services so that the counselors will know where to send trainees for various kinds of help that do not fall within the purview of job counseling. *(See ANCILLARY SERVICES.)*

Although we schedule an hour a week for individual counseling, we have learned that counselors have to expect unscheduled visits and calls as well. Scheduling two or even three hours of individual counseling would not prevent unexpected calls because when a crisis arises, the trainee usually needs prompt attention. Real or imagined slights from supervisors and/or co-workers can be particularly upsetting for trainees who have not previously experienced the rough and tumble of the working world. We recommend, therefore, that your job counselors be prepared for the unexpected.

We have determined at Job Path that a ratio of ten trainees per counselor allows for two site visits and one individual counseling session a week for each trainee, a bi-weekly conference with each supervisor, a morning of intake interviewing every third week, record keeping, staff development, and a thimbleful of time for the unexpected. The ratio that you will need for your program will depend primarily on the number of training site visits, travel time, and individual counseling sessions that you think your population needs.

GROUP MEETINGS

Every new trainee is assigned to a group of approximately ten to twelve trainees that meet for an hour a week under the leadership of Job Path's director of job counseling. During these group sessions trainees share their problems with each other and share solutions as well. It is reassuring for a handicapped person to learn that someone else with the same disability has encountered a similar problem, and even more reassuring when he or she has coped with it successfully. The peer support that emanates from these group meetings is an essential feature of the Job Path model. Members of the group are not afraid to confront each other, to berate each other, to refuse to take excuses from one another, or, conversely, to praise each other, to support one another, to care about each other. You will find that your group sessions

play an important role in helping trainees deal with integration into the work world. They are likely to explore issues that deal with increasing independence, budgeting and money management, accepting criticism, and whatever else a group member needs to talk about. Trainees are ready to leave the group when the director of job counseling thinks they show a good sense of self and can vie successfully in the competitive world.

We recommend that you have the person who directs your counseling staff lead the group meetings. By so doing, he or she gets to know every trainee in the program. What's more, your trainees begin to view this counselor as the anchor on whom they can count at all times. Job Path trainees may change counselors if they change training sites and are at a different location, but the director of counseling is a constant as long as they remain in group.

You will find that the job counseling components add strength and dimension to your program. Indeed, you will find that you could not function without the counseling supports that become an inherent part of your program.

10. Disciplinary Procedures

Handling serious work-related problems that have resisted counseling

We think we can safely predict that if you provide an adequate support system, most of your trainees will function well on their training sites. We would be remiss, however, if we did not acknowledge that there are exceptions, and that every program has to have clearly defined sanctions to use when all other efforts fail.

When we have to resort to a disciplinary recourse at Job Path, we place a trainee on *suspension*. Most suspensions take place after trainees have been given a number of oral warnings and a written one as well, indicating that their behavior needs improvement in ways that are clearly specified. Occasionally, however, you may find that a counselor needs authority to suspend a trainee "on the spot" to reinforce the concept that inappropriate behavior on a training site is not condoned. When a Job Path trainee, for example, chose to spit at another person, he was summarily suspended.

Job Path explains its procedures for suspension and every other aspect of the program in a booklet which we call the *Trainee Manual* and which is written in language that our participants can understand. (Counselors read the manual to trainees who cannot read it themselves.) Its overall tone is encouraging and supportive, but the manual makes it clear that poor work habits will not be accepted.

In determining the length of time a trainee is suspended, we consider the economic and social situation of the individual trainee. For example, because trainees do not receive any pay during the time they are suspended, a loss of income has a more serious impact on the trainee who is living independently than on the trainee who is supported by his or her parents. Suspension represents another type of loss too, since many trainees also miss their co-workers, miss having something to do, miss being employed. And this loss is likely to have a different social impact on each trainee. Suspension should be a dramatic lesson without being a traumatic one. Therefore, we try to work out the fairest possible arrangement.

A trainee's behavior during counseling is another factor in evaluating the length of the suspension period. The signals you receive during counseling may indicate when a trainee is ready to return to the training site and when he or she is not. When a trainee who was suspended for being habitually late, for example, starts arriving on time for his or her counseling sessions and group meeting(s), chances are the time has come for a return to work. Conversely, if a trainee who was suspended for always arriving at work looking dirty, ill kempt, and improperly dressed, arrives at his or her counseling sessions appearing no different, it would be premature to suggest a return to work.

To make certain that suspension is viewed as a disciplinary act, we recommend that you deduct the time served from a trainee's alloted year in the program. It is important to distinguish suspension from times when a trainee may be *on leave* because you do not have an appropriate training site. Thus, any time that is used up on leave should be *added* to the year the trainee is

alloted and any time that is used up on suspension should be *subtracted*. (A year is Job Path's time frame; you may decide upon 18 months or even two years.)

In most cases we think you will find that suspended trainees are able to continue in the program successfully. On very rare occasions, however, if your experience parallels ours, you will find that in spite of all the counseling and support services, and in spite of the impact of suspension, you will have to discharge a trainee from your program altogether.

At Job Path we view this final step so seriously that a counselor must confer with the director of job counseling and then both must confer with the project director before a discharge is acted upon. Since we have only discharged 16 of our 221 trainees in our first two years of operation, we have a limited data base in this area. We can say, however, that by the time your program resorts to this act there will usually be staff unanimity that it is the only approach left to take.

11. Ancillary Services

Providing referrals for trainees with additional needs

If you are patterning your program on the Job Path approach, you will be providing those specific services that enable your clients to make the transition into conventional employment. If you make the mistake of trying to become an overall social service agency instead of a sharply focused transitional employment program, you run the risk of spreading yourself too thin. It is tempting to try to address a host of different client needs, but it is also a mistake. What makes the most sense is to determine where your clients can go for ancillary services and then to make whatever arrangements are necessary.

Job Path's participants frequently need help in mastering basic reading, writing, and arithmetic. They have social needs that are important to address. Some need counseling that goes well beyond the scope of our job counselors. Instead of adding teachers, a recreation program, and a psychiatrist to our program, we refer our participants to existing services that meet their needs.

Job Path, of course, has the advantage of being located in a city that has a wide variety of services already available, so we have been able to concentrate on locating the most appropriate ones for our trainees' needs. If you are working in an area with more limited resources, you face a different challenge.

In order to determine what resources are presently available, you will need to do a little investigating. You might begin by contacting the nearest OVR/DVR office because it funds many agencies that provide ancillary services for handicapped people and may, therefore, point you in the right direction. Your local Department of Human Resources may also be helpful.

Don't forget to explore the services that local voluntary agencies also provide. The Junior League, for example, publishes guides to community services. The Chamber of Commerce and organizations like the Lions, Kiwanis, Elks, and Rotarians may have valuable ideas to contribute.

You may be able to interest agencies in developing services that they do not currently offer. A Girl Scout leader, for example may be willing to set up a social club, and your dental society may organize a low-cost dental clinic for treatment on Saturdays. A senior citizens group may establish an early evening tutoring program, and your local hospital may cooperate in providing medical evaluation.

The specific needs of your participants and the existing ancillary services that your community provides will vary, of course, but we think that there is likely to be a potential for necessary resources in most communities.

12. Follow-Up

Offering gradually reduced supports to former trainees

When your program is beginning, you will find yourself paying a good bit of attention to finding appropriate subsidized training sites in the public sector. As your trainees develop job skills and work habits, you will also need to focus on partially subsidized training sites in the private sector. "Finally," you will seek unsubsidized placements - hirings. We have put "finally" in quotation marks, however, because Job Path has discovered that conventional employment is not the last step. Trainees who have been buttressed with a support system from the day they entered your program to the day they are hired cannot be abruptly separated from all supports simply because someone else is paying their salary. If you make the mistake of attempting such a severance, you are likely to find that you have raised trainees' expectations about their ability to succeed in conventional employment only to see them dashed. Moreover, your rate of job retention will no longer be a selling point when you market your program.

Job Path has designed a counseling arrangement it calls *follow-up* which is intended to assist former trainees in making a successful transition from supported work to unsubsidized employment. The follow-up counselors know the needs of each participant who has progressed through the program because they make a point of sitting in on weekly group meetings for that purpose. Consequently, they have a sense of the amount of support that is likely to be needed in each case.

The follow-up counselor begins by paying weekly visits to the former trainee and bi-weekly visits to the supervisor. (If the firm objects to site visits, which happens occasionally, the follow-up counselor meets the former trainee during lunch hour or before or after work and keeps in telephone touch with the supervisor.) When the former trainee appears to be gaining stability, the follow-up counselor reduces the visits to every other week, then to once a month, to every other month and to a gradual fade-out by the end of a year. Former trainees and their supervisors are encouraged to call the follow-up counselor if any problems emerge between visits.

We cannot tell you the precise number of weeks that will be required before the follow-up visits can be reduced from one level of frequency to another, because the need will vary. Indeed, it would be a mistake to think that the follow-up supports always proceed from more to less in an orderly fashion. You may find that a former trainee has been doing so well that he or she is seen on a bi-monthly basis when an unexpected problem arises, necessitating a follow-up visit for several weeks in a row. After the excitement of being hired wears off, former trainees sometimes have difficulty coping with the boredom and frustration that can be associated with many jobs. In addition to this rather common situation, we have encountered a number of other problems requiring intensified counseling. One former Job Path trainee, for example, felt that some temporary help that her firm had engaged during its busy season was making fun of her. She, therefore, found excuses to stay home from work. Another former trainee thought that a new supervisor did not trust him, which resulted in his being quite unpleasant toward her. A third former trainee wanted to be promoted to a level beyond his competence and threatened to resign if a promotion was not forthcoming.

As your number of unsubsidized hirings increase, you can expect that your number of problems will also increase. When your program is relatively new and few people have been hired, follow-up can be handled by your job counselors who are familiar with the job sites; as your program matures, however, you will find, as we did, that follow-up counseling gets short shrift unless you provide adequate staff to do the job. At Job Path we have designated someone to be responsible for follow-up counseling and have added a follow-up counselor for every 45 trainees who have been hired. Our ratio may not be correct for your needs, however; in working out your own ratio you will need to take the nature of your population into consideration as well as the travel time needed to get from one place of employment to another.

We have found at Job Path that occasionally a trainee is hired before he or she has acquired the requisite social skills, work habits, and job proficiency. A company that had been providing mailroom training for one of our trainees, for example, suddenly had an opening in that department. Rather than hire someone from outside, the supervisor of the mailroom decided to hire our trainee, with the understanding that the full counseling supports be continued until the "trainee/employee" acquired the necessary skills. Thus, despite the fact that this young man was on the company's payroll, he did not go on to follow-up counseling.

At other times Job Path has decided of its own accord to refrain from shifting someone who has been just hired by a firm to follow-up because in our judgment the hiring was premature and the full support system was still needed. Follow-up, therefore, does not automatically go into effect just because a participant has been placed on a company's payroll, even though that is usually the case. Sooner or later, however, every participant in our program who is placed in unsubsidized employment receives follow-up services.

13. A Final Word

Staying on top of your program

Careful monitoring of your program can be time consuming, even tedious - and absolutely essential. If you don't develop a weekly reporting system in order to determine the areas in which your program is keeping pace with your expectations and the areas that need improvement, you may be in for a rude awakening at the eleventh hour.

At Job Path, for example, we decided that we would provide services for 120 new trainees and for 40 other trainees whom we would carry over from the previous year. To meet our goal we had to enroll ten new trainees a month, or, to allow for summer doldrums, 12 trainees a month from September through May and eight trainees a month during June, July, and August. Our weekly report indicates the number of intakes. When only one trainee had been enrolled for two consecutive weeks, we knew that we had to remedy the situation promptly. We therefore stepped up our outreach efforts to referral agencies and arranged to interview applicants three mornings a week instead of two. In a short time our enrollment figures matched our projections. Had we not identified the problem promptly, however, we might have fallen well behind our expectations.

Intake is only one item that is included in our weekly reports. We also tally the number of participants receiving training on public sector sites, the number who have moved to private sector training sites, and the number who have been hired. By so doing, we make certain that trainees do not exceed the maximum number of CETA hours allotted them, and that private sector sites do not keep trainees for more than three months without hiring them. A trainee who is not hired in that time is moved to another site where hiring is in the offing.

It is also important to be aware of the people who are not doing well in your program. At Job Path our weekly summary reports on any trainees who have been temporarily suspended or permanently terminated because of attitudes and behaviors that are incompatible with competitive employment. If these numbers or the number of people who have completed their training without reaching acceptable standards for competitive employment *(RMB - Received Maximum Benefits)* get uncomfortably high, it is a sign to examine more carefully how the counseling and job development components of the program are functioning.

Similarly, if too many trainees are listed as being "on leave," which means they are between training sites, it is time to examine what is happening with job development.

The primary purpose of weekly data collection is to enable your director and key supervisory staff to make certain that your program is meeting its objectives. A second purpose which assumes great importance if you have funding that requires quantifiable objectives is to enable you to determine your enrollments and outcomes on a quarterly basis.

Of course, in order to meet your projections, you must have active job development. This, in turn, requires careful record keeping. Successful job development can be a long process; you may have to make a number of telephone

calls over an extended period to get an interview with a personnel director. No one can be expected to recall all these contacts, unless there are systematic records, to indicate what has happened to date and when the next call is to be made. Good record keeping also prevents one job developer from duplicating the efforts of another. Mindful of how essential accurate and clear record keeping is, our director of job development has devised the following three-level card file system:

1. *A master file* - Each card in this file notes the name, address, and telephone number of the public agency or private business, and the name of the job developer who has made the contact. This file serves as a complete listing of agencies and companies that have been contacted. It also directs staff members to the job developer who is pursuing each contact.

2. *A working file* - At any given time, a job developer may be in contact with at least 50 personnel officers. To maintain an accurate, continuing record of these contacts, a job developer keeps a working file on his or her desk. This file is a set of duplicate master cards for each contact that he or she is pursuing. On these cards, a job developer records the date and substance of each telephone conversation with each contact. It usually requires stapling two or three cards to the initial one in order to keep a complete record on each agency or firm.

3. *A dead file* - This file contains cards listing agencies and businesses which have clearly expressed no interest in learning more about our program. By placing contacts with very little potential in this file, job developers are spared wasted effort, though they may consider "reviving" some of these contacts at a later date.

In conjunction with the card file system, our job developers use a weekly planning calendar to note when each contact should be followed up. Regular, systematic follow-up is crucial to job development.

Systematic procedures are equally essential to job counseling. Our director of counseling meets with each counselor once a week and conducts a weekly staff meeting which all counselors attend. At the beginning of each week, counselors submit their schedules to the director of counseling. This provides her with an advance look at her staff's activities and enables her to reach counselors easily by knowing the time and place of their appointments for the week.

In addition, the director of job counseling has devised an evaluation form that counselors fill out bi-weekly with brief comments for each trainee. (A copy of this form is included at the end of this section.) Counselors also complete a bi-weekly report on their conferences with work site supervisors. And once a month, the work site supervisor evaluates trainees by means of a performance checklist.

Careful monitoring of key aspects of your program will enable you to respond to program needs as they develop.

COUNSELOR's BI-WEEKLY EVALUATION OF JOB PATH TRAINEE

Week of _____ to _____

Trainee _____

Counselor _____ Training site _____

1. Acceptance of supervision
2. Attendance & punctuality
3. Work attitude
4. Adaptability to change
5. Learning new tasks
6. Asking questions
7. Quality of work
8. Quantity of work
9. Work independently
10. Working in group or with partner
11. Stamina: energy & alertness
12. Motivation
13. Initiative
14. Reliability
15. Confidence
16. Neatness & grooming
17. Helpfulness to others
18. Awareness of areas for self-improvement
19. Receptivity to counseling
20. Sociability: with co-workers and/or public
21. Other

We realize that we have not been able to anticipate all of the questions you may have, but we hope that this manual will provide a foundation upon which to build your program. As your program develops, we would be most interested to learn of any problems that you may encounter and of the progress that we anticipate you will make.

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